



## THE STORY OF NATICK

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"John Eliot Preaching to the Natick Indians"

# The Story of Natick

To the elder residents of Natick much of the story related in this booklet is well known and is a source of the pride they feel in their town. Our purpose in telling it here and in searching out some facts not so generally known is to make sure that the younger people and the many families now moving to Natick will also know something of the town's traditions and accomplishments.

In preparing this record we have gone as far as possible to the original documents, a procedure we were able to follow because of the full cooperation of our public libraries, the historical societies and also of individuals who have made available their private collections. The limited space of this booklet made it necessary to condense our findings more than we would have liked, but even in this outline form, the record is impressive: one of which every resident of Natick may well feel proud. It would be hard to find a town that has typified more truly the ideals of a growing America.



John S. M. Glidden, President



JOHN ELIOT

This model of the Apostle, John Eliot, and his praying Indians was made by John Rogers for Dr. Ellsworth Eliot of New York City, who presented it to Eliot Church, South Natick, on July 5, 1901. According to Chetwood Smith, the American authority on John Rogers, this was the only statue ever cast from this mould. It is on exhibit in the South Natick Historical Society Museum at the Bacon Memorial Library. There is no authentic portrait of Eliot. The statue represents the sculptor's picture of him.

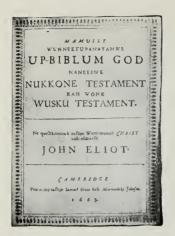
### **NATICK**

This was the Indian name. Some say that it meant "Place of Hills." There is foundation also for the opinion that it signified "my land." Either interpretation may be right. Certainly the founding of Natick was unique, in that it was the first effort in America to provide a community in which the Indians would be protected in their rights and afforded the same opportunities as the white settlers in the towns around them.

The man who founded this new type of settlement was John Eliot. He selected the site as the best of all the land within riding distance of old Boston, or specifically, Roxbury, where he served as "teacher" in the church. As early as 1646 he had started teaching a group of Indians at Nonantum with the aid of the local chief, Thomas Waban. Eliot's primary purpose was to convert the tribes to Christianity. A born missionary, he had set himself, at the age of forty-six, to learn the local Indian language and in this he persevered until he was able to make a complete translation of the Bible for the use of his flock. But he knew that his converts would drift back to paganism if they kept to their old nomadic customs and that what he termed "civility" was necessary to lead them to a Christian way of life. Natick made a perfect setting for this project. Its natural advantages, the river, lakes and rich land, made possible a self-supporting community. The distance from Boston was short enough so that, by travelling on horseback, Eliot was able to divide his week between his old and new parishioners.

It was in 1651, only twenty years after the settlement of Boston itself, that Eliot's "praying Indians" were, at his request, granted 6,000 acres of the old Dedham grant by the General Court of Massachusetts, a tract that comprised about two-thirds of the area of the present town of Natick. The Indians formed their community and built their church beside the Charles River at the spot that now is the center of South Natick. This was the first Indian church in America and the first Christian Indian village. The church, a combination of meeting house, school, parsonage, community center, storehouse, town hall, and fort, was on the identical site of the beautiful old "Eliot Church" now standing. Almost directly opposite, on the slope beside the river, was the Indian burial ground.

Most of the land for the new village had belonged to an Indian family of which John Speen was the head. Eliot's written account of the founding tells us that Speen and his kindred gave all their land, retaining only the same lot appor-



At left: Title page of the Indian Bible translated into the Massachusetts dialect of the Algonkin language by John Eliot. The New Testament was printed in 1661; the Old Testament was added in 1663. An original copy is on exhibit at the Bacon Memorial Library. South Natick. Up-Biblium God—the Book of God.

At right: Tombstone in the wall at the corner of Pleasant and Eliot Streets, South Natick, marks the grave of Daniel Takawombpait, Indian convert and pupil whom Eliot ordained as the minister to succeed him and who held the church together some thirty years until his own death. The inscription reads:

Here lyes the Body of Daniel Takawombpait Aged 64 years Died September the 17th 1716



tionment that was given to the others. Under Eliot's counsel, a representative form of government was put into effect. Particularly impressive was the covenant to which each member of the new village made pledge:

"We give ourselves and our children unto God to be His people. He shall rule us in all our affairs; not only in our religion and affairs of the church, but also in all our works and affairs in this world. . . .

Let the grace of Christ help us, because Christ is the wisdom of God. Send Thy spirit into our hearts, and let it teach us. Lord, take us to be Thy people and let us take Thee to be our God."

Protected from aggression by law, which forbade any white person from owning land in the town, the little community of "praying Indians" made good progress. Relations with the settlers in surrounding towns in general were good, and both Eliot and the Superintendent of the Indians, Major General Daniel Gookin, saw to it that the property rights of the colony were respected. The first registered brand for cattle in America was the symbol of a bow and arrow that was recorded by the General Court in 1670, so that stock belonging to the Natick Indians could be identified. All members of the town government were Indians and this continued for about the first seventy years of the town's existence.

Elior's purpose to teach his converts to live industriously and thriftily succeeded in part, for we have record of numerous members who grew into admirable citizens. Such leaders were Thomas Waban, who served as town clerk, proprietor, selectman and constable for more than fifty years, and Deacon Ephraim, the first deacon in Eliot Church. There were John Speen, Jethro, Mattocks, Pegan and Boston, and their descendents. Probably the person upon whom Eliot relied most was Daniel Takawombpait,\* a convert whom Eliot had taken with him as a boy and who had worked with him throughout most of his ministry. About 1685, when advanced age and failing health forced Eliot to give up his parish, he ordained Takawombpait to take his place as minister, a duty which this noble Indian carried out successfully until his death thirty-one years later.

When King Philip's War broke out in 1675 and threatened the life of every white person in New England, the "praying Indians" of Natick were almost entirely loyal to their colonist neighbors. Two hundred Natick Indians marched as an expeditionary force against Philip's raiders! Indian leaders such as Chief Waban, the physician Joshua Bran, whose courage was inspired by love of a white girl, known to us only as Lydia, who later married him, and the teacher, John Sassamon, were invaluable to the whites as scouts, spies, interpreters, and instructors in the ways

<sup>\*</sup> Also spelled Takawampbait, Takawambpait and otherwise in different records. Often he signed himself simply as "Daniel."

of forest warfare. Sassamon paid for his loyalty with his life; he was ambushed and murdered by some of Philip's warriors.

Unfortunately, in the hysteria that followed Philip's massacres, and notwithstanding the record of loyalty of the Natick Indians, suspicion turned against them and several hundred of them were interned during the winter of 1675 under inhumane conditions at Deer Island. Through the efforts of Eliot and Gookin, and Thomas Oliver, a resident of Cambridge, they were returned to what was left of their homes the following spring. Feeling among the whites against all Indians made Eliot's task much more difficult from then on. It is significant, however, that in the Natick area the people throughout the years carried forward in part the Christian attitude toward the Indians that Eliot's example had taught.



Eliot Bridge across the Charles River, South Natick, marks the site of the original foot-bridge built by Eliot in 1651. At the left is part of the old Indian burying ground and the site of the mill and home built by Deacon William Biglow.

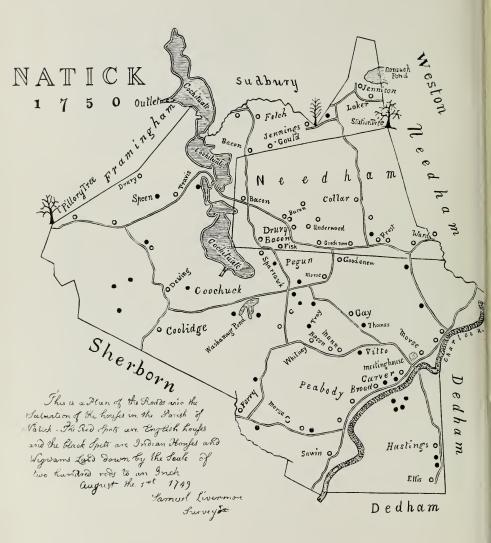
For seventy years or more white settlers were prohibited by law from owning land in the area set aside for the Natick colony, except by special permission of the General Court. About 1686 Thomas Sawin established a grist mill on a site in what is now the Stillman estate, using the water of a brook that still bears his name. The dam at the original site is well preserved and probably is the original itself, for it is buttressed on both ends and in the center by ledges of natural rock. Two other dams built in the early 1700's below the first one are also in good condition. The entire scene makes one of the



Indian Burying Ground on Pond Street in Natick. This land was set apart from the ministerial lot as a burial place for the Indians about 1750. In all, one hundred acres here had been set aside by the twenty Indian proprietors in 1719 toward the support of their preacher.

outstanding beauty spots of Massachusetts. In the foundation wall of a cottage on the estate is a corner stone bearing the inscription of the letters "D" and "A" were transposed by mistake. The problem of this stone, it seems reasonable to conclude that it marks the site of the first white man's house in the Natick area. The entire cottage is very old, but the back part appears to have been built earlier than the front. A logical assumption is that the date 1696 marks the building of the original house and that 1791 was the date of the addition. The first mill in the vicinity of Natick apparently was a saw mill built on Waban Brook near Lake Waban in 1658 and was included within the Indian lands by vote of the Dedham planters. The mill on Sawin's Brook undoubtedly was the first grist mill in the town.

In 1721 the Reverend Oliver Peabody came as a missionary to take over the pulpit that had been vacant since the death of Takawombpait some thirteen years before. Eight years later he was ordained as the minister. When Peabody first came, the historian William Biglow tells us there were but two white families in the town: John Sawin, son of Thomas Sawin, and David Morse. Jonathan Carver's family probably made the third soon thereafter. If we include the Needham Leg and other land that now is Natick, we find among the settlers of about that time the names of Stephen Bacon, Samuel Morse, Ebenezer Felch, John Underwood, John Goodnow, Thomas Coller, Moses Smith, Thomas Dunton and Thomas Frost. By 1735 the names of white men occupied about half of Natick's town offices. The map on page 10 shows how thoroughly the little community was mixed by 1750. The Reverend Mr. Peabody and his successor, Reverend Stephen Badger, who was Parson (turn to page 12)







#### Old Roads and Landmarks

Samuel Livermore's map of Natick in 1750 enables one to visualize the early community and to place old landmarks. In the main, the old roads have been continued with little change and can readily be identified by comparison with the current map. One exception was that Bacon Street, the northern road to Framingham, originally crossed Lake Cochituate at the old ford, near the point that the Saxon-ville railroad branch now crosses. This road later formed part of the Worcester Turnpike, built in 1809.

The Central Turnpike, now known as Central Street through Natick, was not built until 1824. This turnpike was the principal stage route between Boston and Hartford, Connecticut. Prior to building of the Central Turnpike, Pond Street provided the principal road to West Natick, as shown on the old map, connecting with Mill Street and Hartford Street to what is now Framingham Center, and from there to Marlborough and Worcester. The third "through road," called the "Old Hartford Road," passed through South Natick on Eliot Street and led to Hartford by way of Mendon and Uxbridge.

The eastern boundary of the town was changed in 1797 when Natick acquired the Needham Leg, which was the wedge-shape tract of land shown on the 1750 map projecting into the northern part of the town practically to Lake Cochituate. In return, Natick gave a strip of land along its eastern boundary, including the Pond Road area and to the west of Morse's Pond. Several other boundary adjustments also are apparent.

Dug Pond in 1750 still was known by the Indian name, "Washamug." The white settlers later gave it its present name because the steep banks made it appear to have been dug. The pond on the opposite side of Pond Street, now known variously as Fisk Meadow or Dug Meadow, did not exist until the dam was put in at the "Horseshoe" on West Central Street about 1848 when the Boston Metropolitan Water system was built. This caused Beaver Brook, not shown on the old map, to flood the meadow land through which the brook ran and make the present pond. At the same time the original Indian name was restored to Lake Cochituate. The settlers for years had called it "Long Pond."

Particular interest centers in the location of the early homes and names of the families owning them. Many of these are still standing. The hollow circles on the 1750 map represent the homes of white families, the black dots those of Indian families. While it is possible that these homes were put in sometime after the original map was drawn and even that some houses existing in 1750 were omitted, the map in general seems to be well authenticated by other data.



The culvert connecting the second and third bodies of Lake Cochituate is near the site of the old ford used by travelling Indians and later by white settlers. King Philip is said to have used this route for his raid upon isolated families in this vicinity during the uprising known as "King Philip's War."

(Continued from page 9)

Lothrop in Harriet Beecher Stowe's Oldtown Folks, lived out long and useful lives in Natick, serving all races with zeal and conviction. Their graves may be seen in the burying ground near Eliot Church.

The early and middle decades of the eighteenth century were placid enough for Natick. Indian warfare became a matter for the reminiscences of the old folks and the Indians themselves began to disappear, either by selling their holdings and moving away, or too often, falling victims to

epidemics of such diseases as measles and chicken-pox which they seemed constitutionally unable to withstand. The minister was, by virtue of his position, the chief authority and leading intellect of the community, and King's Justice William Boden personified the law, besides serving as an efficient blacksmith, and later as a captain in the Continental army. There was some shoe manufacturing but this was before the days of advanced machinery so it can hardly be designated an industry. The mass of the population was composed of independent small farmers who cultivated their land with the help of their sons, occasional hired hands, and in certain families a number of negro slaves.

It is not surprising that such a homogeneous, individualistic, and essentially democratic society should have risen, almost to a man, to the challenge of the American Revolution. The first blood shed resulting from the pre-Revolutionary unrest was that of Crispus Attucks, descendent of Indian, Negro and white strains, who lived in Natick and Framingham and took part in the demonstration that resulted in the "Boston Massacre." On the historic nineteenth of April, 1775, when the news came to Natick that British troops were in Concord, an eye-witness reported that "every man that morning was a minute man" and marched away to join the citizen army on the field at Lexington. One, Lieutenant John Bacon, lost his life in this action. His home is still standing at the corner of Bacon and North Main Streets.



The Thomas Sawin house on the Stillman estate, South Street, South Natick. The portion of the house having a steeply pitched roof, seen at the left, apparently was the original cottage, built, according to the corner stone, in 1696, the rest of the house being added in 1791. All has been perfectly preserved, even to the old solid beams that form the treads of the cellar stairs.

By the seventeenth of June, 1775, a company of Natick militia had been formed and drilled. This company played an honorable part at Bunker Hill, and suffered numerous casualties. A few days later the town records inform us that a unanimous vote committed the community to the Revolutionary cause. The temper of the times is expressed in vigorous style in the report of Daniel Morse. Town Clerk:

It was unanimously Voted, that in consideration of the many acts of the British Parliament, passed in diverse sessions of the same . . . by which every idea of moderation, humanity, and Christianity is entirely laid aside, and those principles

and measures adopted and pursued which would disgrace the most unenlightened and uncivilized tribe of aboriginal natives, in the most interior part of this extensive continent; and also in consideration of the glaring impropriety, incapacity, and fatal tendency of any State whatever, at the distance of three thousand miles to legislate for these Colonies, which at the same time are so numerous, so knowing, and so capable of legislating . . . and for diverse other considerations which for brevity's sake we omit to mention,—we, the inhabitants of Natick, in town meeting assembled, do hereby declare, agreeably . . . that should the Honorable Continental Congress declare these American Colonies independent of the Kingdom of Great Britain, we will with our lives and fortunes join with the other inhabitants of this Colony, and with those of the other Colonies, in supporting them in said measure, which we look upon to be both important and necessary; and which, if we may be permitted to suggest an opinion, the sooner it is entered into the fewer difficulties shall we have to conflict with, and the grand objects of peace, liberty, and safety will be more likely speedily to be restored and established in our once happy land.

This, in one long sentence, was indeed the "spirit of '76!" Natick townspeople assisted the cause of the Revolution with all the supplies and money that they could muster and, better still, with men.

At right: Indian pothole for grinding corn, cut in this rock on Sawin's Brook before the water level was raised by the mill dam. The hole, about the size of a mixing bowl, held the corn which was mashed into meal by a hand stone or pestle.

At that time the complete population of the town numbered five hundred and thirty-three and from this number came one hundred and ninety volunteers. The rolls of the original militia company indicate that scarcely a household did not send one man or more. Here was the beginning of the long and famous Natick tradition of patriotic service to the whole nation.

It should be recorded, too, that during the difficult early years of our nation the men and women of Natick maintained a fair-minded attitude toward the few among them who differed in political opinion. When such movements as Shay's rebellion threatened the internal security and outward prestige of the new nation, Natick men were indeed ardent "Government Men." But their ardor never made them so intolerant as to resent the Tory sympathy of Lady Badger, the minister's wife, whose anti-Congress views were even affectionately regarded as a great lady's pardonable eccentricities. And when after the war a Tory family brought suit before Justice William Boden for property damage committed by their neighbors during a demonstration, that honest magistrate and Revolutionary veteran decided in favor of full redress for the Tories, an unusual and most courageous ruling in those times.



Boden Lane Cemetery on Boden Lane, West Natick

William Boden may be considered typical of the men who have influenced and personified what is best in the New England tradition. He was a good blacksmith and a good farmer. He seems to have been mostly self-educated and without formal legal training, but he owned and studied his "Blackstone's Commentaries" and his known decisions are models of fairness and insight. Significant of the respect in which William Boden was held by the community is the fact that, although before the Revolution he had served as King's Justice, the people after the war elected him as Town Justice. His grave, together with those of many other Revolutionary veterans, is in the old Boden Lane Cemetery. The land for this cemetery was given by Captain Boden. On the stones there one finds names of men familiar in Natick history of the Revolutionary period and later. Among them are those of Nathan Stone, 1793,



Washington Elm, standing on the west side of Eliot Street. South Natice, in front of the old Hezekiah Broad house. Under this tree George Washington conferred with Captain Broad and other officers while on his way to Boston to organize the Continental army.

Joshua Washburn, 1797, David Haven, 1805, Elijah Drury, 1817, Josiah Walker, 1821, William Perry, 1842, Captain William Stone, 1844, Samuel Washburn, 1848, Major Dexter Drury, 1849, Samuel Morse, 1854 and Elliot S. Wright, 1862.

All Natick inhabitants were deeply interested when the question of ratification of the proposed Constitution of the United States came up for consideration. By a narrow margin the town voted against ratification and so instructed the Natick delegate to the state constitutional convention. His protest remains in the official records of that body. Anti-Constitutionalists in Natick objected to clauses in the Constitution that recognized slavery, already most unpopular among them, and also disapproved of the extent of the powers given to the President. However, when the Constitution was nationally accepted, Natick proprietors loyally swore an oath of allegiance to support and defend it and the new government which it established.

Just as the eighteenth century ended, the most serious internal dispute of Natick, which had been waged with varying degrees of intensity for some seventy years, was brought to a settlement. To the north of the original Natick settlement was a long strip of land shown on the early map (page 10) and known as the Needham Leg.

Residents in this area were compelled to attend church in Needham, a distance five to six miles away. This hardship was but little relieved when the Reverend Peabody rebuilt the Eliot church, for residents of the "Leg" still had to support the Needham church. On the other side, a strong faction, including the Needham parish, opposed any new church. The "Meeting House War," bloodless but bitter, had troubled some of Minister Peabody's and all of Minister Badger's long pastorates.

In 1797 the General Court of Massachusetts required the town of Needham to deed the Leg to Natick. In return, Needham was given the strip of land along the eastern Natick boundary, now including the Hunnewell estates. The new boundary adjustment crystallized the need for a more centrally located meeting house and assembly place and in 1799 a meeting house was finally erected in the present Natick center where the Congregational Church stands today. In those days the new meeting house was the center, the center itself being no more than a crossroads—and a compromise.

No important concentration of homes took place in Natick center, as we know it, until the invention of the steam railroad determined the direction of the town's growth. In 1835 a railroad between Boston and Worcester was built, establishing the route of the present Boston and Albany line, and the first Natick railroad station



Eliot Church, South Natick. Built in 1828, this was the fifth church erected on precisely the site that John Eliot selected for his meeting house in 1651. This picture, taken some years ago, shows the famous oak tree under which Eliot first preached, at the right and somewhat beyond the church. This tree died several years ago. In the rear of the church can be seen the gate to the old burying ground in which lie many of the leaders familiar in early Natick history. (Photo made in 1895.)

was the local result. Formerly, a projected canal from Norwich, Connecticut, to Boston, that would have used the natural Charles River waterway in part, had led some to believe that South Natick would become the trading center. Railroads, however, superseded canal transportation, the new Natick center grew rapidly and South Natick remains today, happily for lovers of the old and beautiful, very much the same peaceful village that Harriet Beecher Stowe presented to a delighted world as "Oldtown" in her Oldtown Folks.

Oldtown Folks is far more than a novel. Mrs. Stowe gathered material for it while living in the house that still stands on Pleasant Street. She drew all of the atmosphere, many of the incidents, and almost all of a vivid cast of characters from the memories of her husband, Professor Calvin Stowe, a born-and-bred Natick man. In her pages, Stephen Badger and his picturesque Tory lady come to life again as "Parson and Lady Lothrop"; the beloved ne'er-do-well philosopher, Sam Lawton, wears the thinnest of all possible disguises as "Sam Lawson"; contemporaries recognized bustling tavern-keeper Eliakim Morrill in "Uncle Fly Sheril," and many more real potentials. Her Natick in laws are called



First Meeting House in Natick center, built 1799 on the site of the present Congregational Church.

"Uncle Fly Sheril," and many more real persons sat for Mrs. Stowe's talented prose portraits. Her Natick in-laws are called "Holyoke" in the book, "Horace Holyoke," the narrator of the story, being Calvin Stowe himself.

But for us of succeeding generations, *Oldtown Folks* has a value beyond that of a portrait gallery. Mrs. Stowe wrote down all that her husband could tell her of the life of Natick in the early nineteenth century: what was eaten, what was worn, what was read, what was discussed, what was admired, and what was disparaged. Farm and shop, meeting house and tavern, stiff parlor and comfortable kitchen, she captured the life of them all and she had the gift of making her researches entertaining. In 1869, when her book appeared in the first of its numerous editions, many were still living who could testify to the truth of her descriptions and interpretation.

The growing up of Calvin Stowe, who made this charming book possible, was in many respects typical of that of Natick's ambitious and independent boys. His mother was widowed when he was only four and it was not many years later that he was apprenticed to a South Natick paper mill to learn a trade. But, as far as we can tell, no Natick youngster ever held poverty a disgrace or a deterrent to achievement. Young Calvin's uncle, "Billy" Biglow, was a Harvard graduate, a former principal of the Boston Latin School, and widely known as a poet, satirist, writer, historian, and encyclopedia of general knowledge. To his nephew, such a man could not fail to bring stimulating impressions of the wide world of books, ideas, and people. Calvin's first earnings were spent on text books and, when means permitted, he attended the academies at Bradford and Gorham to prepare for college. Later he was one of the most brilliant and popular students at Bowdoin—no mean accomplishment, for this village-bred youth was the classmate and associate of such men as Longfellow, Hawthorne, Horatio Bridges, John P. Hale, and the future President Franklin Pierce. In after life he proved his abilities as a minister, writer, editor,

# "As We Were" . . . Actual Natick Scenes with names used in Mrs. Stowe's Oldtown Folks, 1869

- (Center) "Parson Lothrop's" (Reverend Stephen Badger) house and the Friendship Elms which the Indians planted in 1753. The house still stands on Eliot Street.
- (Upper right) "Deacon Badger's" (Biglow) grist mill, no longer standing but, in Mrs. Stowe's day still on Pleasant Street.



- 3. (Top center) "Tina's" kittens which appear in the story.
- 4. (Top left) Another view of "Parson Lothrop's" home and elms.
- 5. (Center right) A 1900 view of the Eliot Street the Stowes knew.
- 6. (Center left) "Uncle Fly's" (Morrill)
  Old Tavern, now gone.
- (Lower right) "Deacon Badger's" (Biglow) house site.
- 8. (Lower center) The Jewell House, long a Natick landmark.
- 9. (Lower center) The Eliot Church, "Oldtown's" and ours.
- (Lower left) "Lady Lothrop's" wedding gown, now in Bacon Museum.

professor of ancient and sacred languages, educator, lecturer, and as the helpful husband of a distinguished woman, Harriet Beecher Stowe. Mrs. Stowe used to say of her husband, "Whenever I don't know the answer to something, I just go to Calvin. He knows everything!"

Of such men, Natick can always be proud. It has been her tradition to give "success stories" in the form of original and energetic minds to the wider world. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the books of Horatio Alger Jr., son of a Natick minister, repeat the theme of adversities overcome by character, transposed to a big city setting. Surely no other writer of boys' stories has so shaped the ideals and ambitions of American



Harriet Beecher Stowe

youth. Even today Ragged Dick, Phil the Fiddler, Tattered Tom, Mark the Match Boy and others of his many books are well remembered, for they taught the basic virtues of character that have made America great. Horatio Alger died in 1899 at the home of his sister, Mrs. O. Augusta Cheney. His funeral was held in the Eliot Church where his father was long the pastor. His grave is in Glenwood Cemetery, South Natick.

Outstanding among Natick men who made their mark on our national life was Henry Wilson. This was his adopted name, taken in place of his baptismal name, Jeremiah Jones Colbath. Born into circumstances of extreme poverty in Farmington, New Hampshire, he came into Natick as a young laborer recruit of the then-flourishing shoe business. The kindly interest of certain citizens, in particular the Reverend Mr. Erasmus D. Moore and Deacon William Coolidge of the First Congregational Church, encouraged young Wilson in his quest for self-improvement. He became a founder of the first Natick Debating Club and there and at the "Lyceum" he learned to express himself vigorously and easily in public. His education was necessarily spasmodic, his financial disappointments were many and discouraging, but his achievements at the time of his death in 1875, at the relatively early age of sixty-four, include school-teaching, the establishment of his own shoe factory, a brigadiergeneralship in the state militia, a term as Natick representative in the General Court, three consecutive terms as United States senator and, under President Grant, the office of Vice-President of the United States. During the Civil War he was Colonel of the Twenty-Second Regiment and later, an aide-de-camp with General McClellan and the Army of the Potomac.

Wilson was nationally honored as a liberal and as a Republican who never hesitated to put principles before party when the two conflicted, but most especially he



Henry Wilson



Shop at the corner of West Central and Mill Streets in Natick where Henry Wilson learned the craft of shoemaking as an apprentice. Although this was only one phase in the versatile career of this able and public-spirited political leader, all his ntterances were nationally hailed with affection as the words of "The Natick Cobbler" and the tiny building where he earned this title is preserved today as a shrine to other poor but industrious young men.

figures as an eloquent leader of every Congressional step that was taken for the benefit of the colored race, those measures that were brought to a triumphant culmination when Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. To this remarkable man, Natick was always "home." His house on West Central Street still stands and his body is in Dell Park Cemetery near Lake Cochituate.

When Henry Wilson spoke to the country at large, opposing the spread of slavery and the inherent evils of a social system based on slavery, he expressed convictions that his Natick neighbors had long shared. They felt that he spoke for them when he attacked any oppression, especially oppression which was established on the irrational ground of race. The traditional passion for justice and fair play rose to crusading fervor during the Civil War when Natick could claim the highest per capita ratio of Union Army volunteers of any section in the entire North. Nor has any such national emergency found Natick slow with the gift of her men. In every war they have contributed heavily to the victory and the town's honor rolls tell a long proud story.

The years have inevitably brought many changes to Natick. Ten public schools and one parochial school have replaced the one-room building that stood on William Boden's gift of land. In a town that disputed for seventy years over a meeting house location, there are now fourteen different churches, representing almost as many varieties of faith, and the congregations live at peace with each other. At the time of the American Revolution it will be recalled that the Natick population totaled five hundred and thirty-three; today the number is nearer nineteen thousand and there



#### Sam Lawson House

So named in "Oldtown Folks," it was really the home of Samuel Lawton. It was built about 1798 and is situated on the west side of Eliot Street, South Natick. Samuel Lawton originally maintained his blacksmith shop in the basement.

are over four thousand dwellings. The Indians have vanished forever, but the ideals upon which John Eliot founded the town equality of opportunity and responsibility, fair dealing, and industry—still live.

To the sports world the name Natick immediately brings to mind numerous outstanding athletes. Remembered with pride are Dinso Donovan who ran fifty miles in five hours, a national record that stood for years, and his nephew, Piper Donovan, who in 1895 set up a new world's record for the hundred yard dash. Charles H. Hoey invented the art



Boyhood home of Professor Calvin Stowe, husband of Harriet Beecher Stowe. The second-floor chamber in the corner at the left was her workshop, in which she gathered the material for "Oldtown Folks." In the book, Professor Stowe is depicted as Horace Holyoke. Near South Natick square.

of Indian club swinging and later won the national championship in a match at the Howard Atheneum. It was Natick's hook and ladder team that made a world's record in 1898, connecting and running hose two hundred and twenty yards in fifty-eight seconds. Baseball fans will recall that the first "drop ball" and "jump ball," curves that broke sharply downward and upward respectively, were pitched by Elmer M. Bent of Cochituate and Natick in a game back in 1885 when the local team beat the otherwise undefeated Harvard College by 3 to 1. The Harwood baseball factory was the first and for many years the largest in the world. Famous football players from Natick have included Eddie Mahan, Eddie Casey, Billy Murray, and Chick Burke. The dean of baseball umpires, Tom Connolly, will always be recalled as the gift of Natick, as also will the famous college coaches, Mike Murphy, Keane Fitzpatrick and Pooch Donovan. These are by no means all who should be mentioned, but they alone would be enough to mark their home town high in the nation's sports history.



Willard Bacon house on Eliot Street, South Natick, built in the early 1700's. Horace Mann, in a paper read to the South Natick Historical Society in 1882, said: "The house, with its wide fireplace, its rough beams, its handmade clapboards and wrought iron nails, is a specimen of the skill and handicraft of a race who wrought earnestly and well..."

In the preparation of this story, the major task has been that of condensing the vast amount of material at hand. Much of importance has had to be left out or barely mentioned. Fortunately, however, the sources of the story are available to those who would like to read further.

First must be mentioned the South Natick Historical Society Museum at the Bacon Memorial Library. Under the able direction of its curator, Miss Mabel A. Parmenter, the visitor there finds innumerable materials for research concerning the beginnings of both our town and our nation. In Natick center the Morse Institute likewise is most helpful, with a large collection of books, documents and pictures of early days. The histories of Natick by William Biglow, 1830, and by Oliver N. Bacon, 1856, are important accounts of the town's founding and development and Mrs. Stowe's Oldtown Folks is a "must" for those who would really like to understand the traditions of Natick and of New England itself. The archives of the Massachusetts Historical Society and State Library in Boston, and of the Widener Library at Harvard University, are also rich in Natick lore.

Since the days of its unique beginning, Natick has been a friendly, sociable town. Much of its community life centers in its many churches, but these groups come together in a variety of service and social organizations: Rotary, Kiwanis, Masons, Odd Fellows, Knights of Columbus, Eagles, Foresters and Grange all have flourishing chapters here. There are also the Natick Women's Club, the Catholic Women's Club, Eastern Star and Rebekahs. Much interest is felt in the various school activities, including athletics, and in all patriotic movements and associations. An additional cultural focus is the famous Walnut Hill School for girls which is located here.

There are many recreational opportunities afforded in Natick. The Sherwood Country Club has an excellent nine-hole golf course and other facilities for sports. Lake Cochituate is just being returned for use as a swimming, fishing and boating

A memorial to the Natick dead of two wars, Natick Common. The inscription reads: "Erected to perpetuate the memory of those who gave up their lives to save our country in the war of 1861." Also engraved are "1867—Honor To The Brate" and "Spanish-American War—1898-1902." The business block seen in the background as well as much surrounding property suffered complete destruction during the five of 1874 which ravaged Natick center, hence all buildings in this part of town are rebuilt and of comparatively recent date.





Stephen Bacon house on North Main Street, Natick. It was built by Stephen Bacon in 1704 and may be the oldest house now standing in the town. It was the birthplace of Lt. John Bacon who was killed in the Battle of Lexington. In 1775 this house served as the warning center for the Minute Men of the area. Earlier the first public school classes of the community were held bere.

area after serving for a hundred years as part of Boston's water supply. The Coolidge playground with its new grandstand and athletic fields is a center for team sports.

To these many activities the newcomer is cordially welcomed. Natick is a happy place to live and a happy place to come to. It is hoped that every new resident will quickly take his part in the life of the community. Even though the numbers of its population now are reaching large figures, the town is developing in such a way that it retains the benefits of the neighborly little village that it was in earlier times.

The make-up of Natick's people is typical of the commuting population that represents a thriving suburb. The occupational census taken in 1940 revealed

that Natick has a higher percentage of professional people than the state average and a higher than average proportion of skilled craftsmen and business people. It has only about two thirds of the average proportion of factory operatives and farm workers. The proportion of its native born residents is well above the average for the state and more than sixty per cent of the town's five thousand families own their homes. As can be seen from these figures, Natick, although it has never been known as a wealthy town, has a population which, in the main, is comfortably situated. Local interests cover the usual wide range with a lively emphasis on sports. The tradition of accomplishment has always stood foremost, as one can



Home of Robert Jennison, who built it in 1738 and who designed and built most of the Garrison type houses of the period in the Natick, Sherborn and Sudbury areas. The house is on Frost Street, Natick and has been fully restored by the present owner, Mr. Henri Prunaret.









Four of Natick's ten public schools. Upper left, the High School; upper right, Junior High School; lower left, the West Natick, and lower right, the South Natick elementary schools.

easily imagine after considering the town's history. Individual worth has, from the beginning, been more valued than race or position.

Many new families are now coming to Natick and the rate of home building here exceeds that of almost any Boston suburb. Approximately four hundred and fifty new homes were started during the two years, 1946 and 1947, and current plans indicate that at least three hundred and fifty more will be added during the full year, 1948. Practically all of the new buildings are single-family residences in the medium price bracket.

Several attractive new developments are being built at the time of this writing, among which are the Sherwood Homes that will occupy most of the large tract between Lake Cochituate and historic Boden Lane. The development surrounds the Sherwood Country Club. In North Natick, on lands first settled by Ebenezer Felch some two and a half centuries ago, is the Stratford development of attractive moderate-priced homes, and a mile or more to the east are Oak Park Manor and Oak Dale, two collections of well designed houses in a beautiful natural setting of New England countryside. On Bacon Street attractive new homes are being built in the Hillside Terrace group.



Natick Congregational Church



Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church



Fisk Memorial Methodist Church

This rapid growth in Natick and the surrounding area has long been foreseen as a result of the steadily expanding suburban movement from Boston itself. Demand for homes here has also been augmented by the substantial industrial growth of Framingham. Current estimates point to a continued growth at the rate of nearly a thousand residents a year in Natick during the next decade. There is every reason to believe that this estimate will be fulfilled or surpassed, for the town affords some of the most beautiful home sites to be found within the commuting radius of Boston, excellent transportation and municipal planning control that can be relied upon to direct the development along sound lines.

It is interesting that most of the new homes are now being built on that good farming land so highly prized by settlers in the early "Needham Leg" and other farsighted pioneers who set up their



Morse Institute-Public Library

homesteads hereabouts nearly three hundred years ago. In all, the town has more than three thousand acres of land that is, or can be made, suitable for residential use and ultimately will provide space for as many more dwellings as now exist. Acreage to the south and east will eventually be developed in a way similar to the trend in the northern and western sections—a trend designed to preserve the comfort and freedom of village living amid a fast-growing community.

Here then is something of Natick's past and a hint of the future. "The place of hills" was a good and fruitful place for those who preceded us and it will be good to us now and those who come after us if we remember the ideals, the foresight and the courage which were established here with the first tiny settlement. Both a tradition and a promise are among our possessions and as we honor the one, so we cannot fail to fulfill the other.



Bacon Memorial Public Library



St. Patrick's Catholic Church

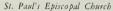


Sacred Heart Catholic Church



Natick Unitarian Church







First Baptist Church

#### LORD'S PRAYER IN THE NATICK INDIAN DIALECT

Our Father in Heaven, hallowed Thy Kingdom Thy Name; come: Nushun kesukqut, quttianatamunach ktowesuonk; kukketassutamoonk peyaumuutch; Thy will be done on earth as in Heaven; give us kuttenantamoonk nen nach ohkeit neane kesukqut; asamaiinean yeuyeu kesukod and forgive us daily our sins nummeetsuongash asekesukokish kah ahquontamaunnean nummatcheseongash neane we forgive them; also lead us wicked doers matchenekuk quengig nutahquontamounnonog; ahque sagkompagunaiinnean en into temptation; deliver us from evil: Thine qutchhuaonganit; Wehe pohquohwussinnean itut wutch match; newutche kutahtaun and power and glory Amen. forever. ketassutamoonk kah menuhkesuonk kah sohsumoonk micheme. Amen.

(Arranged from a translation by John Christopher Adelreng from John Eliot's Bible)



Albanian Orthodox Church



Congregational Chapel



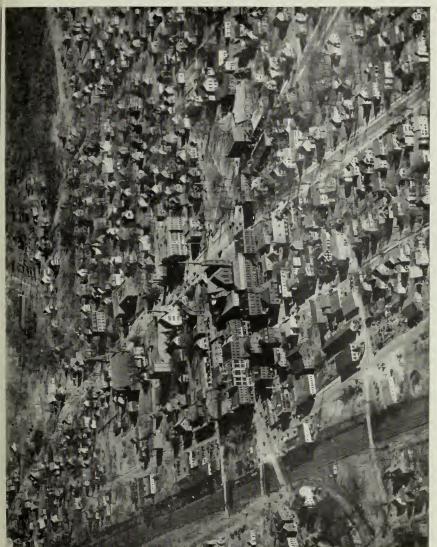
STATION TREE

This famous landmark was used by the earliest surveyors. It marked the northeast corner of the Needham Leg and now shows the boundary line between Natick and Weston. The tree is a black oak and is estimated to be at least 500 years old. It stands on Winter Street and can readily be recognized by the Natick-Weston boundary stone, as seen in the photograph.



Top: Walcott Square and South Main Street, Natick, seventy years ago.

Bottom: Main Street before the fire, 1874, showing Clark's Block and the old fire station which was located about where the Main Street Pharmacy is now.



Air View of Natick center-Photo by Cheyne Aerial Surveys



This old Indian was wont to sit at Bacon's fireplace and eat in the kitchen. He was the oldest Indian remembered. He would shuffle into the farm house and sit silently by the fire, then take his leave without word or ceremony. . . .



